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To: Instructional Quality Commission
c/o Thomas Adams, Executive Director
1430 N Street, Suite 3207
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Re: Edits to the Draft Narrative post October 8/9 meeting

We have received the edits from the October 8/9 meeting. While some improvement has been made, we did not find the regressive changes to the origin of the Indo-European languages, the central beliefs of Hinduism or the explanation of caste to have been corrected.

We can assure the commission that we are not presenting a single edit we do not feel absolutely essential to an authentic and historically accurate account of Indian history and the Hindu religion.

We would be failing a generation of teachers and students if we chose to be "content" with the adoption of only selected portions of our submissions. Every one of our corrections is important to the process, to an accurate history of India and to the Hindu community in America.

This is not how the other religions have historically been treated during an editing process. We seek the fairness and due regard you have rightly shown all others.

We urge the Instructional Quality Commission to review and adopt these carefully considered remaining list of edits, which now number 19.

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Edits for IQC meeting of Nov. 19

UBEROI FOUNDATION INSTITUTE FOR CURRICULUM ADVANCEMENT

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(page and line numbers from Oct. 8 version of draft Framework narrative, att1c6-8hss)

1. p. 211, line 810

Change indicated: Indian history then entered the Vedic period (ca. ~~1500-500 BCE~~), an era named for the *Vedas*, Sanskrit religious texts passed on for generations through a complex oral tradition.

Replace with: ca. 2000-500 BCE.

Justification: Carbon dating has established that the Saraswati River dried up by 2000 bce, the date just given in line 809. Since the Rig Veda repeatedly describes the Sarasvati as a mighty river flowing from the Himalayas to the ocean, the Rig Vedic civilization had reached its zenith at least by 2000 bce, and good evidence is there for an even earlier date. It is not in keeping with most recent historical research to leave the 1500 bce date, which was first proposed in the 19th century, prior to the discovery of the Indus-Saraswati civilization and the discovery of the dried channel of the Saraswati River (once thought to be "mythical") by satellite imagery and subsequent excavation.

2. p. 211, line 812

Change: "In that period, people speaking Indic languages,"

Add: "In that period, according to many scholars, people speaking Indic languages...."

Justification: Since at the end of this section we say there is a minority opinion, it is only accurate to state this is a majority opinion. Otherwise, this is given as a statement of fact, instead of the debatable hypothesis that it is. The September 29, 2014, IQC version made this clear with its wording: "Most scholars argue on the basis of linguistic and archaeological evidence that people speaking languages in the large Indo-European family entered India from Central Eurasia in the second millennium BCE; others have argued against this view." (p. 165, lines 664 to 667)

3. p. 211, line 813

Delete indicated: "entered South Asia, probably by way of Iran."

Replace with: "entered South Asia, probably by way of the northwestern regions of India."

Justification: The historical evidence is not there to be so specific as to say they came by way of Iran, better to make a general statement of "northwestern regions."

4. p. 211, line 817-819

Delete indicated: "The early Indic speakers were most likely animal herders. They may have arrived in India in scattered bands, later intermarrying with populations ~~perhaps ancestral to those who speak Dravidian languages, such as Tamil and Telugu in southern India and Sri Lanka today.~~"

Replace with and add: "...later intermarrying with the local populations. Historically, there was a significant dispersion of Harappan-Saraswati society from 1900 BCE onward, likely caused by ecological changes, with a large section of the population moving to the Ganga plains and other areas within and even beyond India."

Justification: There is no evidence of Dravidian languages in the Indus-Saraswati region. Geographical names, such as of rivers, mountains and seas, are historically durable. Even when the language of a people changes, these names tend to remain the same. None of the geographical names of the Indus-Saraswati region show an indisputable source in Dravidian language. Further, there is no evidence of the dispersion of Indus culture to South India as might have been expected if the Dravidians moved south from that region. If the language of Indus-Saraswati was non-Indo-European, it would more likely have been Munda.

The important historical point to be made here in this last sentence is that the population of the Harappan civilization dropped drastically with people moving both east and west to more suitable environments in which to live. This is the established historical fact, whereas the theories about language remain unproven.

In 2001, Edwin Bryant, professor of Hindu religion and philosophy at Rutgers University, published, *The Quest for the Origins of Vedic Culture, the Indo-Aryan Migration Debate*, by Oxford University Press. In the book, he details the current linguistic and archeological evidence for and against a migration theory. He concludes, "The fact that there is no consistent archaeological evidence of the Indo-Aryans crossing central Asia and into India indicates that the archaeological record, on its own terms, does not point to the trans-Asiatic trajectory of a linguistic or ethnic group into the subcontinent in the second millennium bce."

Dr. Nalini Rao states, "The language of the Harappan civilization has been difficult to decipher as neither its script nor its language is known, although the latest research points to it being related to old Sanskrit. Munda language was an earlier theory."

5. p. 211, line 822

Delete indicated: " Later in the Vedic period, new royal and commercial towns arose along the Ganges (aka-Ganga), India's second great river system."

Justification: This is an instance of not using the most recent scholarship, but instead using colonial era names for Indian places and natural features. "Ganga" is the proper name of the river and students should learn it, just as they should learn that Madras is now Chennai and Rangoon is now Yangon. There is no need to perpetuate these colonial names and the attitude behind them in the Framework. Students should instead be taught to respect the formal names of geographical features, and not some anglicized version.

6. p. 211, line 823-825

Delete: "~~In this era, Vedic culture emerged as a belief system that combined the beliefs of Indic speakers with those of older populations.~~"

Replace with: "By 600 BCE the social, religious, and philosophical ideas and practices central to early Hinduism are fully evident and in continuity with the Harappan culture and the teachings and ceremonial worship described in the Vedas."

Justification: While we appreciate the dropping of the word Brahmanism, this sentence is still a restatement of the Aryan Invasion theory, which has been acknowledged as in dispute. If the "minority" position added after line 821 turns out to be true, as is increasingly likely, this statement is necessarily false. Why then say it? Better to just describe the historical situation as we know it.

7. p. 211-212, lines 831-833

Delete: "~~Brahman may be manifested in many ways, including incarnation in the form of deities, including Vishnu, who preserves the world, and Shiva who transforms it.~~"

Replace with: Brahman, the one Supreme God, manifests as the various Deities with multiple names and forms.

Justification: The previous sentence talks about monism, now we are talking about the personality aspect of the Supreme God as understood in Hinduism.

Incarnation is the wrong word here, because in Hinduism *incarnation* or avatar usually refers specifically to the ten incarnations of Vishnu as Krishna, Rama, etc. Brahman does not "incarnate" as Shiva or Vishnu.

8. p. 222, lines 833-834

Delete: ~~"These gods and goddesses could be seen as aspects of Brahman, an all-pervading divine, supreme reality."~~

Replace with: These Deities are worshiped as distinct personal Gods or Goddesses, such as Vishnu who preserves the world, Shiva who transforms it, Sarasvati, the Goddess of learning, etc.

Justification: This combined with the previous edit are a more clear explanation of how Hindus view the Supreme Being and the various forms of Gods and Goddesses.

9. p. 222, lines 838-839

Delete: ~~"Performance of duties and ceremonies became one dimension of the supreme quest to achieve oneness with divine reality."~~

Replace with: "Performance of duties and ceremonies, along with devotion and meditation, became dimensions of the supreme quest to achieve oneness with God."

Justification: Since we're saying that performance of duties and ceremonies is one dimension, it seems only logical to present two other key dimensions, devotion and meditation, which are equally necessary and important.

The Oct 8th text avoids ascribing a belief in a capital G "God" to Hindus, which is part of the Orientalist agenda on Hinduism to reserve "God" only for the Abrahamic faiths. We believe this to be prejudicial and theologically inaccurate.

10. p. 212, lines 843-844

Delete indicated: ~~"Success or failure at existing in harmony with dharma determines how many times an individual might be subject to reincarnation, or repeated death and rebirth at either lower or higher positions of moral and ritual purity."~~

Justification: Here, as usual, the focus in explaining an aspect of Hindu philosophy is upon caste. It's being done without using the word, but by using the phrase "lower or higher positions of moral and ritual purity." Leaving aside that ritual purity is a concept in many religions and not unique to Hinduism, Hindu philosophy does not say birth in a higher jati is a requirement for attaining oneness with God and hence freedom from rebirth. There are myriad examples of God-Realized Hindu saints who were from the lowest jatis--Kabir, just for one.

11. p. 212, lines 844-846

Delete: "~~Progress toward spiritual realization is governed by karma, the principle that right deeds done in one lifetime condition an individual's place in the next one.~~"

Replace with: "Progress toward spiritual realization is governed by karma, the principle of cause and effect by which human actions, good and bad, affect this and future lives."

Justification: "Karma," as such, is simply the principle of cause and effect. A consequence of this principle is that deeds done in one lifetime impact future lives. Our deeds also impact our present life. We think our proposal a more accurate and clear statement of the Hindu understanding of karma. It also avoids the use of "condition," which doesn't bring any clarity to the idea. Finally, "individual's place in the next one," is again the Orientalist approach of reducing all Hindu beliefs to considerations of caste.

12. p. 213, lines 859-861

Delete: "~~In addition, by 500 CE or earlier, there existed certain communities outside the jati system, the "Untouchables," who did the most unclean work, such as cremation, disposal of dead animals, and sanitation.~~"

Replace with: "In addition, by 500 CE or earlier, certain communities called Untouchables were shunned by the rest of society because they did the the most unclean work, such as cremation, disposal of dead animals, and sanitation."

Justification: The well-meaning IQC edit is to change "this system" (meaning the caste system) to "the jati system." The problem with that is the Untouchables very much existed within the jati system, i.e., they were endogamous groups. The edit was intended to eliminate the word caste, and this is something we endorse, but you can't replace caste with jati. Instead using the word "shunned" accurately states the situation for the Untouchables.

13. p. 213, lines 862 to 877

Delete all but the last two sentences of this paragraph (with one word change in last sentence): ~~"Relations between classes came to be expressed in terms of ritual purity or impurity, higher classes being purer than lower ones. This class system became distinctive over the centuries for being especially complex and formal, involving numerous customs and prohibitions on eating together and intermarrying that kept social and occupational groups distinct from one another in daily life. Over the centuries, the Indian social structure became more rigid, though perhaps not more inflexible than the class divisions in other ancient civilizations. When Europeans began to visit India in modern times, they used the word "caste" to characterize the social system because of the sharp separation they perceived between groups who did not intermarry and thus did not mix with each other. Caste, however, is a term that social scientists use to describe any particularly unbending social structure, for example, slave-holding society in the American south before the Civil War, which can make the "caste" label offensive. Teachers should make clear to students that this was a social and cultural structure rather than a religious belief. Today many Hindus, in India and in the United States, do not identify themselves as belonging to a jati caste."~~

Justification: While some improvement was made to this paragraph, we again strenuously object to coverage of caste being more than doubled on Oct 9th from the earlier drafts, which will result in expanded coverage over multiple pages in the textbooks. We do not understand how that came about, as no Hindu comment suggested any such addition as seen here prior to the last two sentences. There is no reason to harp upon caste which has already been clearly explained in the preceding paragraph. This is the very topic which has resulted in the repeated humiliation of our children in 6th grade social studies. Also, we are also unable to find any reference to social scientists calling slavery a form of caste system. Slavery and caste are different systems. The word caste should be changed to jati in the last sentence.

14. p. 214 lines 883-887

Delete indicated: ~~"Although ancient India was a patriarchy, women had a right to their personal wealth, especially jewelry, gold, and silver, but fewer property rights than men. They participated equally with their husbands in religious ceremonies and festival celebrations. Hinduism is the only major religion in which God is worshipped in female as well as male form."~~

Replace with: "In ancient India women had a right..."

Justification: According to the Encyclopædia Britannica (2007) entry on matriarchy, and other sources, most anthropologists hold that there are no known societies that are unambiguously matriarchal. Why, therefore, should India be characterized in this fashion when patriarchy was the usual pattern in ancient times? No such stress was made in the narrative for other societies or religions. In fact, the only other place the word patriarchy appears in grades 6 to 8 is on page 194 with reference to Mesopotamian society. The word does not appear even once in the grade 9 to 12 narrative, despite describing patriarchal societies. This is adverse reflection on Hindu society, a gratuitous and unnecessary statement as well as historically inaccurate.

15. p. 263-4, lines 688 to 639

Delete: ~~Sanskrit became the principal literary language throughout India.~~

Replace with: "Sanskrit became the standard language of communication, composition, intellectual and artistic production for religion, law, diplomacy and literature, not only among Hindus but also Buddhists and Jains. This was true not only for India but for the regions beyond India, especially Southeast Asia, where the Sanskrit epics Ramayana and Mahabharata were very popular."

Justification: Sanskrit was far more than just the language of literature; it permeated the culture of not only Hindus but also Buddhists and Jains. The influence of Sanskrit is remarkable, plausibly encompassing nearly half the world's population in this time period, from Indonesia to Afghanistan.

16. p. 256, lines 524 to 526

Delete indicated: Muslims did not force Christians or Jews, "people of the book," to convert, but people of other religions were ~~sometimes forced to convert~~.

Replace with: ...but people of other religions were forced to convert most of the time in India as well as in other countries such as in central Asia.

Justification: The present wording downplays the scale of forced conversion of Hindus and other people under Muslim rule, which was the usual pattern especially between the 8th to 15th centuries.

17. p. 306, lines 1543 to 1545

Delete indicated: "A new world religion, Sikhism, was founded in 1469 in ~~South Asia~~. Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak, a social reformer ~~who challenged the authority of the Brahmins and the caste order.~~"

Replace with: "A new world religion, Sikhism, was founded in 1469 in India. Sikhism was founded by Guru Nanak, a social reformer who stressed the personal worship of God, the equality of all people and challenged the power of the Mughal empire."

Justification: First, we object to the use of the word South Asia as a backward projection of modern classifications. The area in question was "India" at the time. Second, the revised wording on equality eliminates the adverse reflection which is otherwise implied in "caste order," as caste in India is obviously associated with Hinduism. As well, this statement on Nanak's view of caste lacks supporting evidence. We recommend keeping "challenged the power of the Mughal empire" as a historically characteristic feature of the development of the Sikh religion. It is comprehensive and accurate, and we believe very much in line with the Sikh view of their own history.

18. 1551-1552, p. 306

Correct indicated: With the addition of Sikhism, there were now four major religions in India.

With: "four major religions in India of indigenous origins."

Justification: The IQC adopted our correction here, that there were four major religions instead of three, but the sentence is still unclear. What is meant here is that there are four major religions which originated in India. In the 15th century, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Zoroastrianism were all present in India for many centuries.

19. p. 447, lines 534-537

Delete indicated: "Print technology and more rapid transportation aided the growth of organized religion. ~~These technological developments also facilitated the transformation of regional Indian religious traditions into a more unified Hinduism.~~"

Replace with: "These technological developments also facilitated integration of regional Indian religious traditions into the larger religious tradition of the subcontinent while still retaining their regional identity."

Justification: Hinduism did not so much become more unified as the various regional traditions came to better see themselves as part of the larger religious tradition of the subcontinent, but without loss of their particular identity. This is a critical point. The present wording is saying the technology created a unified Hinduism at the expense of the regional identities, and this is simply not true.